

# OPERATION FOG *Program*

Whether you're traveling south to enjoy the warmer climate, heading north to walk among the majestic redwoods or you live here in the fertile Central Valley of California, you need to always be aware of winter driving conditions, especially when dense tule fog blankets area highways.

This type of fog can catch you by surprise because it hangs in the low-lying valley bottoms—one minute you're driving along at 65 mph or faster with a clear view of the road and the next minute your visibility drops to less than 200 feet and the traffic ahead of you slows to a crawl. This dramatic change in visibility and the speed of traffic can lead to multiple-car pileups and severe injury and death.

Caltrans and the CHP began "Operation Fog" in 1991 in an effort to help make you aware of this unique winter driving condition in the Central Valley and to reduce the number of fog-related accidents.

This program not only relies on educational information like this brochure, but it also uses high-tech equipment to help you find your way when the going gets tough on Interstate 5 and State Route 99. There are roadside weather stations and visibility meters, electronic message signs and low-powered AM radio stations that gather information and alert you in advance of foggy conditions. Signs that estimate road visibility and reflective off-ramp markers also aid in helping you travel safely. The CHP escorts traffic through dense fog when needed from Modesto to Bakersfield.

You must do your part as well to avoid becoming an accident statistic. You must reduce your speed and allow added distance between vehicles when driving in the tule fog. It's also a good idea to phone the Caltrans Highway Information Network, 1-800-427-ROAD (7623), before leaving home to get the latest highway condition information anywhere in the state. If it's really bad out there you might want to postpone your trip until the fog clears.

To order more of these brochures or the "Operation Fog" driving tips poster, please telephone the Caltrans District 6 Public Affairs Office at (209) 488-4248. Safe Driving!



## WHAT IS *Tule Fog?*

As the storm track moves further south during the winter months, rain begins to spread over the San Joaquin Valley. Radiation fog (called tule fog) forms during the night and morning hours from November to March in the Central Valley.

On clear nights when the ground is moist and winds are calm, the ground cools rapidly. This in turn causes the air adjacent to the ground to cool and condense into fog. As successive layers of the air cool, the fog layer becomes deeper. During the day, the sun heats the airmass and ground. The fog then begins to evaporate and "lift," which is responsible for improved visibility.



## FOG DRIVING *Tips*

1. Reduce speed so you can stop within the distance you can see in front of your vehicle.
2. In zero visibility, you may pull far off the roadway and turn off the headlights until you can see more clearly.
3. Drive with your headlights on low beam - NEVER drive with just your parking or fog lights.
4. Avoid crossing traffic unless absolutely necessary.
5. Listen for traffic you cannot see.
6. Use windshield wipers and defroster for the best vision.
7. Be patient! Don't pass lines of traffic.
8. Don't stop on any freeway or heavily-traveled road.
9. If your car stalls or is disabled, move away from it to avoid injury.
10. Call the Caltrans Highway Information Network at 1-800-427-ROAD for the latest highway condition information.